



The Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative Community Schools Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***What is a community school?***

A community school combines the best quality educational practices with enhanced and extended day (before and after-school)/summer programming to foster academic success for students and ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings and weekends.

Community schools are flexible in their implementation and reflect a community's needs, culture and environment. No two community schools are identical in their implementation. The Community Schools Coordinator, among other school staff, effectively addresses early childhood education, homelessness, hunger, poverty, access to medical and dental care, transportation, student achievement, substance abuse and adult education. Because the school building becomes an anchor for the community, the community has opportunities to come together to support the school and enrich their lives through educational classes and civic events.

2. ***What counties are eligible for funding?***

School districts located in Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler and Sherman counties are eligible to apply.

3. ***Is a community school a charter school?***

No. Charter schools are nonsectarian public schools that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. The "charter" establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The length of time for which charters are granted varies, but most are granted for 3-5 years.

Charter schools located within the counties listed in question #2 are eligible to apply.

4. ***What are the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative Committee's funding objectives?***

They are:

- Improve student achievement
- Increase parent involvement
- Build community engagement through broad community support
- Foster community partnerships

- Create opportunities for beneficial, long-lasting change for students, their families and the community
- Leverage funds and other resources (in kind donations, time, information) to support community school programs
- Sustainable community school programs

5. *What are some examples of desired outcomes or results for a community school funded through the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative?*

The Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative seeks to improve student achievement, increase parent involvement and build community engagement through community schools. Successful outcomes may include:

- readiness for school
- improved academic achievement for students
- improved student attendance
- increased parent involvement and level of engagement at their children’s school
- improved student relationships with adults
- improved access to social services, including medical and dental care
- increased community engagement
- increased financial and in-kind resources for school-based services and activities
- develop sustainable community school programs

6. *What are some examples of how grant funds can be used?*

Proposals may request funding for:

- Staffing
- Training for key staff, community members
- Curricula, materials and supplies
- Transporting students to and from extended day program activities
- Nutritious snacks for participants
- Scholarships for students to participate in fee-based after-school program
- Overhead expenses associated with the extended day programming including: utility bills, maintenance & snow removal
- Other reasonable requests necessary to implement and sustain a community school program

Proposals may not request funds for:

- One-time events or performances
- Religious activities
- Items purchased or grant activities occurring prior to grant decisions
- Capital improvements
- Operating support
- Influencing legislation

7. *Is a Community School Coordinator required?*

Yes. The Community School Coordinator is responsible for directing the extended day programming, building relationships with the community members, recruiting community partnerships and coordinating with school staff to ensure the alignment and coordination of extended-day services to meet the needs of students and their families.

8. **How much do community schools cost and how are they funded?**

Community schools respond to the needs of the students, families and the community. Therefore the amount of money that is needed to fund the community school will vary depending on circumstances.

Programs and services at community schools are financed through a variety of public and private funding streams that support particular services, e.g., after school, healthcare, service learning, parent engagement and many others.

Flexible funds, that can be used to respond to specific needs, can be an important impetus for getting the community school off the ground.

The Community School Coordinator's salary should be at a professional level and competitive with teachers. Communities use a range of different funding streams to fund this position. The Community School Coordinator can be employed by a school district, nonprofit organization or public agency.

National and local funding resources are available. Remember, there is not an exact formula for funding a community school. Leadership is as important as funding resources.

9. **What is the role of the community school design team?**

The design team is responsible for the planning and implementation of the community school. Teams will ideally represent the education, nonprofit, government and business sectors to involve a broad cross-section of the community. By involving a broad cross-section of a community in the vision, planning and implementation of the community school, communities will be more equipped to implement and sustain a community school.

10. **For what amount of grant funding can communities apply?**

Grants will range in size depending on school district need, level of community support, and a clear plan and ability to demonstrate outcomes. Multi-year requests, 3-years maximum, will be considered. The maximum grant a school district can apply for is \$150,000 over three years.

11. **Will multiple year requests be considered?**

Yes. The Regional Action Initiative committee will consider proposals requesting funding for up to three years for a community school.

12. **How many grant proposals per school district will be considered?**

All school districts in Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Sherman, Wasco and Wheeler counties are eligible to apply. One proposal per school district please.

13. **What is the process for evaluating grant proposals?**

The Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative committee will read and evaluate all proposals. Those that are competitive will undergo a thorough evaluation, including a site visit. Proposals will be evaluated on their strengths, weaknesses and alignment with the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative's funding objectives.

This is a competitive application process. Due to limited funds available through the Central

Oregon Regional Action Initiative, not all proposals received will be funded.

14. When will funding decisions be announced?

Funding decisions will be announced in April 2010. Community School programs are expected to be implemented in the fall of 2010.

15. What is the mileage reimbursement policy for the October 29th Fall Conference on Community Schools?

A flat reimbursement rate for mileage is available, upon request, for those traveling more than 50 miles round trip. Funding is limited and carpooling is strongly encouraged. Mileage reimbursement requests are subject to a first come, first serve basis. If you are interested in being reimbursed for your mileage, please complete a mileage reimbursement request and give it to OCF staff. Reimbursement request forms will be available at the conference and online at www.oregoncf.org.

16. Where can I learn more about community schools?

- The Coalition for Community Schools: <http://www.communityschools.org>
- Oregon Commission on Children and Families: <http://www.oregon.gov/OCCF>
- Children's Aid Society National Center for Technical Assistance:
<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/comunityschools/starting>
- UC Davis / Center for Community School Partnerships
Community School Partnerships Toolkit: <http://hsfo.ucdavis.edu/node/640>
- Stanford University John Gardner Center: BASIC Tool Kit:
<http://johnwgardnertestsite.pbworks.com/>

17. What is the Regional Action Initiative?

The Oregon Community Foundation's Regional Action Initiative is designed to engage Oregonians in a new level of civic leadership to improve communities in a significant and lasting way. One of seven regions in the state, the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative will provide up to \$1 million in funding for community school programs.

18. Where can I learn more about The Oregon Community Foundation's funding opportunity for community schools through the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative?

The Oregon Community Foundation's website, www.oregoncf.org, has information on the Regional Action Initiative as well as tools, resources and examples for communities interested in applying for funding to implement or sustain a community school. To access this information, go to the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative page on the OCF website.

For more information, please contact:

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